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**Der Präsident**

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### **"Stop Vivisection" Citizens' Initiative**

Honorable President of the European Parliament,

The German Neuroscience Society (Neurowissenschaftliche Gesellschaft/NWG) is one of the largest Neuroscience Societies in Europe. We have the goal to support neuroscience in research and education and to foster research into the functions of the brain and the nervous system, from molecules to organisms, and the pathophysiology underlying human diseases.

We strongly urge the European Parliament and Commission to oppose the "Stop Vivisection" Citizens' Initiative submitted in March 2015 that requests to abrogate the directive 2010/63/EU of the European Parliament and of the council of 22 September 2010 and ban animal research.

We support the existing directive 2010/63/EU that provides for ethical and justified use of animals for biomedical research while allowing the progress in scientific advances that have significantly benefited both human and veterinarian care. The current Directive is vital to ensure that necessary research involving animals can continue and to maintain enhanced animal welfare standards.

The NWG promotes and advocates for the responsible use of animals for biomedical research. There is no alternative to research using animals to understand complex interactions among different systems in a whole organism, which would otherwise be impossible to decode. Hence, complex animal models are necessary to model complex diseases. Ultimately, this systems approach is paramountly important for any further progress in new therapeutic strategy development, and has resulted in important advances in e.g. the fields of cancer, stroke and infarcts, as well as neurological diseases.

At the same time, the NWG strongly supports the 3R (refinement, reduction, replacement) approach wherever possible, i.e. wherever simpler systems can be used to understand physiological or pathophysiological principles, and encourages research into complementary and alternative methods.

For this reason, the NWG together with FENS and other relevant organizations in the research field calls on the European Parliament and Commission to reaffirm their commitment to the Directive. Any roll back from this would both undermine animal welfare and compromise high-quality research using animals.

Sincerely,

Hans-Joachim Pflüger

*President of the German Neuroscience Society (NWG) e.V.*